

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Structural Pest Inspector Requirements

Do I need to be licensed as a Structural Pest Inspector?

- (1) Are you conducting inspections for potential or proposed real estate transactions?
- (2) Are you inspecting for or reporting on the presence or absence of any of the following?
 - termites
 - carpenter ants
 - wood infesting beetles
 - wood rot (fungus)
- (3) Are you inspecting for or reporting on damage by any wood destroying organisms?
- (4) Are you inspecting for or reporting on any of the following conditions?
 - inadequate clearances such as may be found in a crawl space
 - structural wood or siding in contact with soil
 - wooden debris under or near the structure
 - inadequate ventilation causing excessive moisture in wood
 - water in a structure from poor drainage or a plumbing leak

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, YOU must be licensed as a Pest Inspector.

How do I become licensed as a Structural Pest Inspector?

To obtain a pesticide license to perform Structural Pest Inspections, you must:

- ➔ determine the type of license you need by reviewing the *Pesticide Licensing Fact Sheet*;
- ➔ pass the required WSDA pesticide exams. These include the Laws & Safety exam and either the Structural Pest Inspector or PCO Structural exam.*
- ➔ complete a license application and pay the appropriate fee; and,
- ➔ submit proof of financial responsibility that has been completed by your insurance or bonding agent.

* Study manuals for these exams are available from the Washington State University Bulletins Office at 800.723.1763 or <http://pep.wsu.edu/education/smof.html>. Refer to Washington Pesticide Laws and Safety (MISC0056), Pest Management Study Manual for Pest Control Operators (MISC0096) and Wood Destroying Organism Key (EB 1814).

What type of financial responsibility is required for a Structural Pest Inspector license?

As a means of protecting people who may suffer legal damages resulting from the actions of a structural pest inspector, you must provide WSDA with evidence of financial responsibility on the Structural Inspector Surety Bond Form or Financial Responsibility Insurance Certificate (FRIC)*. Licensees are required to carry a surety bond in the amount of \$25,000 **or** an errors and omissions (E&O) insurance policy in the amount of \$50,000. An E&O policy must be on an occurrence basis with a minimum three-year occurrence clause. Neither may have more than a \$5,000 deductible. If the applicant has failed to satisfy the deductible amount in any prior legal claim, they will be required to furnish an additional surety bond or insurance policy to satisfy the amount of the deductible.

The FRIC must list **all** structural pest inspectors covered by the insurance policy. WSDA must have at least one FRIC on file that contains the original signature of the agent. If you work for another structural pest inspector, you may send a copy of their FRIC as long as the original is on file with WSDA. Note to Commercial Applicators: The FRIC needed to perform commercial pesticide applications is different from the Structural Pest Inspector FRIC. If you do both types of work, both types of forms are required.

Once licensed, the structural pest inspector must maintain his/her insurance policy or surety bond at the required level. If the inspector fails to provide evidence of financial responsibility or the policy or bond falls below the required amounts, the inspector's license is automatically suspended.

*Both forms available by contacting Pesticide Licensing or at <http://www.wa.gov/agr/pmd/etc/forms.htm#licensing>.

What else do I need to know to legally perform Structural Pest Inspections?

Rules governing structural pest inspections are found in Rules Relating to Wood Destroying Organisms, WAC 16-228-2000 through 16-228-2040. A publication entitled *Inspections for Wood-Destroying Organisms* may be helpful in explaining these rules.

All WDO inspection reports that are prepared in conjunction with the transfer, exchange, or refinancing of any structure must have an Inspection Control Number (ICN) recorded on them. The ICN should be listed in the upper right hand corner of the report's first page. Realtors, mortgage lenders, and WSDA will begin routinely looking for the ICNs on WDO reports. When you receive your pesticide license, you will be given information on obtaining ICNs through WSDA's toll free line. There is no cost for these numbers.

Pesticide law makes it illegal to advertise that you perform WDO inspections if you are not properly licensed. In addition, noncompliance with the inspection requirements can result in a civil penalty of up to \$7,500/violation. WSDA maintains a listing of properly licensed inspectors on its Web site at http://www.wa.gov/agr/pmd/pesticides/lic_struct_pest.htm.

Pesticide licensing questions can be directed to 877.301.4555 or license@agr.wa.gov .
